

**In the Claims:**

Please amend claims 1, 9, 12 and 19 as indicated below. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions.

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1. (currently amended) A reticle sorter coupled between a reticle storing system and one or more photolithography exposure tools, comprising:

one or more ~~bays~~locations adapted for holding a cassette having slots for reticles;  
a sorting system adapted for retrieving the reticles from and inserting the reticles into the slots in order to sort the reticles within the cassette; and

an inspection system, coupled between the one or more ~~bays~~locations and an input port of the reticle sorter, for inspecting a characteristic of each reticle.

2. (previously presented) The reticle sorter of claim 1, further including a controller coupled to the sorting system for controlling the sorting of the reticles in response to a command from a host system.

3. (previously presented) The reticle sorter of claim 1, further including a storage location for holding a reticle, wherein the sorting system may place a selected reticle on the storage location during a sorting operation.

4. (original)The reticle sorter of claim 1, wherein the sorting system includes an arm with claws for grasping edges of reticles.

5. (canceled)

6. (previously presented) The reticle sorter of claim 1, wherein the inspection system includes a video camera coupled to a display device for presenting a visual image of a reticle.

7. (previously presented) The reticle sorter of claim 1, wherein the inspection system includes a tool for measuring an amount of dust on a reticle.

8. (previously presented) The reticle sorter of claim 1, wherein the inspection system includes a tool adapted for detecting flaws in a reticle pattern.

9. (currently amended) The reticle sorter of claim 1, further including means for moving each of the cassettes from the input port to one of the one or more ~~bays~~locations.

10. (original) The reticle sorter of claim 1, wherein the sorting system includes two or more docking locations.

11. (previously presented) The reticle sorter of claim 10, wherein the sorting system is adapted to move reticles between a first cassette in a first one of the two or more docking locations and a second cassette in a second one of the two or more docking locations.

12. (currently amended) The reticle sorter of claim 1, including three or more ~~bays~~locations.

13-18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) A reticle sorter coupled between a reticle storing system and one or more photolithography exposure tools, comprising:

one or more ~~bays~~locations adapted for holding a plurality of cassettes having slots for reticles; and

a sorting arrangement adapted for retrieving the reticles from and inserting the reticles into the slots so as to sort the reticles between cassettes.

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